

Act 184

Sections of the Act related to the establishment of the
Commission on the Future of Economic Development

* * * Part VII. Economic Planning * * *

Sec. 16. Repeal; Transfer of Economic Planning Funds

(a) 32 V.S.A. § 5930j (Vermont economic progress council; long-term economic development planning) is repealed effective July 1, 2006.

(b) Sec. 271b of H. 881 of the 2006 session, amending 32 V.S.A. §5930j (relating to Long Term Economic Development Planning) is deleted. The amount of \$60,000 appropriated by Sec. 272(e) (11) of H. 881 of the 2006 session to the Vermont Economic Progress Council to fund economic planning is appropriated for this purpose to the Commission on the Future of Economic Development established by Sec. 17 of this act.

Sec. 17. 10 V.S.A. § 1 is added to read:

§ 1. COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(a) There is established a Commission on the Future of Economic Development. The commission shall consist of twelve members. The Governor shall appoint five members, including a chair of the commission; the Speaker of the House shall appoint one member, who shall be a member of the House of Representatives; and the Committee on Committees shall appoint one member, who shall be a member of the Senate. The Vermont labor council shall appoint one member representing labor; the Vermont association of non-profit organizations shall appoint one member representing non-profit organizations, and the governor shall appoint a self-employed person. In addition, the

Secretary of Commerce and Community Development and the Executive Director of the Economic Incentive Review Board shall serve as ex officio members.

(b) The first commission shall serve a term from the date of appointment through June 30, 2012, and beginning July 1, 2012, appointed commission members shall serve for four-year terms. Board members shall be entitled to payments per diem and expenses as provided under section 1010 of Title 32; and legislative members shall be entitled to payments for per diem and expenses as provided in 2 V.S.A. §406.

(c) On September 15, 2007, and thereafter, every five years beginning December 1, 2011, the commission shall report to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, the Senate Committee on Finance, the House Committee on Commerce, the House Committee on Ways and Means and the governor a proposed five-year economic development plan for the state of Vermont. The commission may contract with a consultant for purposes of developing the plan, and shall apply to the Emergency Board for any expenses the commission may incur in its official duties.

(d) The commission shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee at such times as the committee shall request on the progress of the commission's economic planning.

(e) Each commission's five-year plan shall identify the long-term goals for Vermont economic development and job retention in light of the local and global economic climate and for increasing the well-being of Vermonters and their communities. The plan shall identify prioritized criteria by which to evaluate legislative proposals for economic development programs in the coming five years which will best serve the goals of the five-year plan.

(f) In fulfilling its economic development planning responsibilities, the commission shall:

(1) Conduct a planning process that is open and inclusive, with broad-based public engagement ensuring participation that is demographically and geographically representative of the state and includes input from a wide range of perspectives, expertise and interests, including the general assembly, state agencies and the administration, regional and local planning and development organizations, municipalities, the private sector, and business organizations, including owners, knowledgeable in the areas of economic interest such as agriculture, social and human services, energy, education, child care, environmental issues, science and technology, arts and culture, transportation, telecommunications, housing, workforce development, and tourism and recreation.

(2) Build a plan by coordinating and considering existing economic development information and strategic plans produced by other organizations and agencies, such as regional economic development strategic plans, comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDS), legislative initiatives, and research and reports by organizations such as the Vermont business roundtable, the Vermont council on rural development, the Vermont technology council, the Vermont sustainable jobs fund, and the University of Vermont.

(3) Include an examination of the issues critical to encouraging business to develop in Vermont, including workforce development, development of higher education institutions, infrastructure development, quality of life issues and tax policy.

(4) Discuss and develop possible working definitions of the creative economy in the state, identifying and aggregating the creative, artistic, inventive and cultural enterprises, and other sectors of the economy, including media design, sustainable technologies, added value manufacturing, natural resource industries, and environmental technologies that comprise part of the state's creative technology and review possible measures and indicators of economic benefit, costs, and contributions to the state from the creative economy sector.

(5) Include the development of a meaningful benchmark process that sets economic development goals appropriate for Vermont and measures the state's position relative to those goals.

(6) Consider and make recommendations to the legislature on any other aspect of economic development that the commission deems appropriate.

(g) The plan shall also consider:

(1) The cost-effectiveness of targeted business incentive grants and nonmonetary business aid such as permit and regulatory assistance or other assistance and increased development of infrastructure.

(2) Whether targeting incentives to regions of the state with high unemployment, low wages, or other indications of need for economic development and job creation would better advance the long-term goals.

(3) Whether Vermont tax policies place Vermont businesses at a competitive disadvantage and how best to address these policies and mitigate their effects.

(4) The specific needs for development or improvement of transportation and telecommunications systems.

(5) The types of post-secondary institution expansion of development which would attract research and technology firms.

(6) The advantages and disadvantages of privatizing all or a portion of economic development functions of the state.